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IN GIPSY TENTS.

WE remember some years ago walking out of Maidstone to Penenden Heath. It was a still, warm evening in the beginning of May. A crescent moon hung low in the heavens, and in her soft and misty radiance the stars looked wan and feeble. A solitary nightingale made music to the night, and her liquid notes filled all the silence with melody. Out in the dim distance of the heath were numerous scattered points of light, only one degree brighter than the stars above them, and looking as if a straggling company of glow-worms were lighting themselves to some midnight conference. 'What are those lights?' was the natural inquiry. 'Oh, these are the gipsies; they camp regularly out on the heath.' Here we were, then, within a few hundred yards of a tribe of English gipsies.

No effort was made to explore the heath further; as in truth, the ideas we had formed of these 'houseless rovers of the silvan world' were not of the most prepossessing kind. Yet these ideas were not perhaps very different from those generally entertained of this mysterious and wandering race; for with most people, any knowledge possessed of the gipsies is as likely as not to have been derived from the pages of poetry and romance, rather than from authentic history or personal observation. And neither the romancers nor the poets have, as a rule, done much to elevate our conceptions of the gipsy character. Perhaps Sir Walter Scott in his *Meg Merrilies* has done more than most novelists to humanise these wanderers—to teach us that, even under the scarlet mantle of the weird gipsy woman, with her mysterious incantations, her muttered anathemas, her wild bursts of impetuous and revengeful passion, there yet beats a woman's heart, a heart not incapable of sympathy and goodness and fidelity, though handicapped may be with a more than average supply of that 'deceitfulness' which is said to be the prerogative of all hearts. But if the novelist has softened his representation of the type in this instance, he has not done so

in another; for in the person of Hayraddin Maugrabin we have it placed before us in the darkest colours.

Yet, whatever the truth or untruth that appears in these representations of gipsy character, it is to be remembered that so little has been written of gipsies which did not in the main tend to fortify the popular prejudices, that it was next to impossible to form any opinion as to their character in which the evil elements did not preponderate over the good. In the past two or three centuries, they have been to the civilised world what the Jews were to the people of the middle ages—objects of persecution, of infamy, of social contempt. But gipsies, we are glad to learn, are not by any means so black as they have been painted; nor did we know how much they were unlike the stereotyped portraits of them, until we had perused the newly published work from the pen of Mr Francis H. Groome (*In Gipsy Tents*: Edinburgh, Nimmo & Co.).

Mr Groome is already well known as an authority—perhaps the chief living authority—on the subject of gipsies, their history and language; their habits, and manners, and morals. His knowledge of them has been gained by practical and prolonged observation, and by the study of their history in the past. The present work is not written in the ordinary historical form; and for this reason some readers may be disposed to go away with the impression that they have been perusing a romance rather than looking upon a picture of real gipsy life. If so, this would be a misfortune, both for the reader and the writer. Mr Groome's account of the gipsies is mainly given in the shape of conversations 'in gipsy tents,' in which, with the exception of the writer, all the interlocutors are Romané—that is, gipsies; yet what passes between them is nevertheless solid and historical fact. More than a merely literary purpose is served in so shaping the discourse. It has the advantage which all truly dramatic representations have, of bringing us into closer contact with the everyday life of the men and women so treated—their pleasures and cares, their likings and dislikes, their

virtues and vices. The whole is clothed in a fascinating literary style; sharp, pointed, picturesque; full of striking portraits sympathetically drawn. Nor can one lay the book down without feeling that the author succeeds in bringing the gipsy people nearer to us as men and as brothers, than has ever been done in any former work on this strange and little understood race.

The gipsies appear to have arrived in England and Scotland some time about the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century; but very little is known of their early history and condition beyond what may be gathered from the criminal and statutory records of the period. It is not a pleasant picture which is thus presented to us; the treatment of the gipsies, both in England and Scotland, forming one dismal record of death and repression. 'It was,' as Mr Groome observes, 'something like the cruel old Norfolk gardener. He was hoeing one day, and a frog hopped out before him. "I'll larn you to be a frog," said crabbed Roger; and hoed it forth-with in pieces. So, "I'll larn you to be gipsies," said English lawgivers; and the gallows were their means of education.'

There are, as already remarked, gipsies and gipsies; and themselves complain that *gorgios*—that is, the people outside the gipsy world—fancy all gipsies the same—Lovells and Taylors, Stanleys and Turners, Boswells and Norths. Nay, worse than that, they take for gipsies the nailers, potters, besom-makers, all the tagrag and bobtail travelling on the roads.' And, in truth, we all know a type of so-called gipsy that is commonly to be met with. You have only to stumble into some bit of waste ground where the tent is pitched, to have at once tangible testimony of their presence. There is the brown canvas stretched loosely over its low semicircular supports—the cart with its shafts leaning upon the ground, and the skeletonised horse feeding near by—kettles, teapots, and other utensils lying scattered about among the straw and ashes at the entrance to the tent, and a woman with dishevelled hair pottering about the open fire on which the family meal is cooking. Half-way within the tent door is seen the prostrate form of her lord, as he lazily smokes his blackened pipe or is wrapt in mid-day slumber—and from all points of the compass, sweeping down upon you with the suddenness of a simoom, a swarm of little ragged wretches, unwashed, unkempt, unrestrained, each more eager than another to be the first—to beg. Nothing can possibly be said in support of such a state of things; it is contrary to all reasonable conceptions of social order and progress.

Happily, such wandering creatures are not to be confounded with the genuine gipsy, many of whom are not only respectable in themselves, but can boast both of the respectability and affluence of their ancestors. In Mr Groome's book many graphic pictures are drawn of ancient gipsy grandeur—that is, among the *élite* of the

tribe. One interlocutor, speaking of the time when his grandfather was travelling with forty pounds in his pocket to spend on horses, says: 'Why, you'd see the lanes then crowded with Romané—Lovells and Boswells and Stanleys and Hernes and Chilcotts. Something like gipsies they were, with their riding-horses, real hunters, to ride to the fairs and wakes on; and the women with their red cloaks and high old-fashioned beaver hats; and the men in beautiful silk velvet coats and white and yellow satin waistcoats, and all on 'em booted and spurred. Why, I mind hearing tell of my grandfather's oldest sister, Aunt Marbeleenni, and that must have been a hundred years and more. She was married to a very rich farmer in Gloucestershire, so she was very well off; and one day some of her brothers went to call on her; and when she seen 'em, she wouldn't allow them into her house, for she said: "Now that I am married, I shall expect you all to come booted and silver-spurred." Gipsies! why, there aren't no gipsies now. . . All the old families are broken up—over in 'Merica, or gone in houses, or stopping round the nasty poverty towns. My father wouldn't ha' stopped by Wolverhampton, not if you'd gone on your bended knees to him and offered him a pound a day to do it. He'd have runned miles if you'd just have shewn him the places where some of these new-fashioned travellers has their tents.'

That a certain praiseworthy degree of thrift and industry exists among many of the gipsy families, is evinced by the circumstance that each of their large tents costs between ten and twenty pounds, that their two-wheeled carts cost forty pounds apiece, and that many of the men carry on a very extensive trade in horses. The interior of their tents is roomy and comfortable. The largest of them are twenty feet deep, twelve feet wide, and ten feet high. 'Round the sides runs a kind of divan, of oat-straw spread with furs and brilliant rugs; a dais is formed at the further end by feather-beds, blankets, and other bedding; in the midst is a carpet, sure token of Romani prosperity. A nosegay of wild-flowers, a bunch of withered hops, some peacock feathers, a looking-glass, and two resplendent carriage-lamps, are all the adornments; but the effect is neither unhomey nor inæsthetic; there are thousands worse housed than are the houseless gipsies.' Nor, if statistics are to go for anything, is the sanitary condition of such dwellings so defective as at first thoughts we may imagine. Mr Groome gives a list of families born and brought up in tents: Bazena Clifton, sixteen children, fifteen living; Silvanus Lovell, thirteen children, twelve living; Sylvester Boswell, eight children, seven living; Noah Boswell, fourteen children, thirteen living; Edward Taylor, thirteen children, ten living; Elijah Smith, nine children, eight living; Ezekiel Boswell, five children, four living; John Wood, seven children, all living; and Harry Organ (half-breed), six

children, all living. Our author, therefore, is of opinion that this tent-life is not an unmixed evil—that these tents are, when properly kept, and sobriety and decency observed among the inmates, much to be preferred to the dens of Spitalfields, and the thousand other slums of our large cities.

One great drawback of this wandering life—and the importance of which Mr Groome is fully alive to—is the difficulty of conjoining with it proper means of education. Various schemes have been proposed; and each of these is here discussed, and what is good in it pointed out. The gipsy encampments, however, are not changed in all cases with the day or the week; at certain places in England as many as two hundred gipsies may be found encamped from the end of October to the beginning of April; and there are other places where they have not shifted their quarters for two, five, even sixteen years. In such instances as these, there is nothing to prevent gipsy children from attending school; nor does the difficulty in Mr Groome's opinion lie wholly with the gipsies, for schoolmasters in many cases are not very willing to receive them. The chief difficulty connects itself with the children of those gipsies who wander all the year through; and yet even these wanderers are becoming anxious for education to their children. Our author states that he lately had a letter from one of the Lees, nomad English gipsies who travel in North Wales, stating that, though illiterate like most of their brethren, they are keeping with them a Welsh gipsy lad who can read and write well, and so acts as their private secretary; and more than that, is tutor to the entire family. The letter was written by him; 'but at its foot stood a huge and laborious "Manuel Lee"—a hint, it struck me, to gipsy educationists.' Mr Groome therefore proposes that gipsy schoolmasters should be appointed for the children of our chief English 'gipsyries;' and if such were wanted, he would engage to find at least a score. This plan appears reasonable. To take measures, with the hope of driving them suddenly out of their nomad life, to betake themselves to houses, would be certain to fail. It is impossible to change the habits of centuries in a day; and the adoption of such educational measures as would best meet the emergency with least sacrifice of the feelings and, it may be said, instincts of the gipsy tribes, is the more likely to be in the end successful.

For a class of persons that are popularly supposed to live by working on the superstitions and credulities of their fellows, the gipsies are themselves singularly superstitious. Some gipsies set their boots crosswise before they go to bed, fancying thereby to keep away the cramp; a female gipsy carried the skeleton of a mole's foot, which she called a 'fairy foot,' because she believed it good against rheumatism; and it is a standing truth amongst them that babies in teething should wear a necklace made of myrtle stems, which for a boy, must be cut by a woman; by a man, for a girl. An adder's slough, or a bit of mountain-ash, is certain to bring good luck; and with the same object, some of the children wear round their necks black bags containing fragments of a bat. In order to hurt an enemy, you have only to stick pins in a red cloth rag and burn the same; others, for the same end, resort to the cruel practice of sticking pins in a toad till it looks like a hedgehog, and then bury it, with

certain observances. The sight of a water-wagtail, if it does not fly when conjured in a certain rhyme to do so, is a sign that strange gipsies are to be met with on the road. Of an old woman, a 'ghost-seer,' we are told that she carried in her pocket a little china dog dressed like a doll. 'I mind,' says the gipsy who tells the story, 'she lost it once, and she was in an awful state till it was found; and she used to fancy it would talk to her when she was all alone smoking her pipe in the wagon. You should have seen a pack she had of very old fortune-telling cards, which was painted in different colours. She used to select the different ones for each day; sometimes she would have those with the devil and serpents on 'em, then other days she would carry those with birds and palaces.'

That gipsies are not so irreligious in their habits and modes of thought as is too readily believed of them, many affecting proofs are given in this book; and the testimony of various clergymen is cited in evidence of the decorum and piety of many members of the English 'gipsyries,' and the regularity of their observance of the sacraments, and attendance upon public worship. One instance may be quoted. The Rev. J. Finch-Smith, of Aldridge Rectory, near Walsall, writes: 'During the thirty years that I have been rector of this parish, members of the Boswell family have been almost constantly resident here. I buried the head of the family in 1874, who died at the age of eighty-seven. He was a regular attendant at the parish church, and failed not to bow his head reverently when he entered within the house of God. I never saw or heard any harm of the man. He was a quiet and inoffensive man, and worked industriously as a tinman within a short time of his death. If he had rather a sharp eye for a little gift, that is a trait of character by no means confined to gipsies. One of his daughters was married here to a member of the Boswell tribe; and another, who rejoiced in the name of Britannia, I buried in the father's grave two years ago. After his death, she and her mother removed to an adjoining parish, where she was confirmed by Bishop Selwyn in 1876. Regular as was the old man at church, I never could persuade his wife to come. In 1859, I baptised privately an infant of the same tribe, whose parents were travelling through the parish, and whose mother was named Elvira. Great was the admiration of my domestics at the sight of the beautiful lace which ornamented the robe in which the child was brought to my house. Clearly there are gipsies, and those of a well-known tribe, glad to receive the ministrations of the church.' With such material to work upon, it does not seem that the social improvement of the gipsies need be looked on as the hopeless task which many believe it to be. If Mr Groome's book is successful in removing this and other misconceptions regarding this interesting people, he will have accomplished what is by no means an unimportant purpose.

Besides throwing much new and interesting light upon the social aspects of the gipsy character, Mr Groome deals at some length with the Romani or gipsy language, of which he is himself a fluent speaker; and such of the translations of their tales and traditions as he gives are singularly entertaining, and will serve as valuable

contributions to this department of folk-lore. The effect of the book as a whole is to elevate the gipsy character in the popular acceptance; many of the facts given being well fitted not only to draw public attention to the social condition of these people, but to afford our legislators some satisfactory clue to the solution of the difficulties which presently surround the questions of gipsy education and gipsy improvement.

MY HOLIDAY IN JAMAICA.

CHAPTER IV.—A WEST INDIAN STORM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE next few days passed over pleasantly enough. We lounged and read and played lawn-tennis in the evenings. We returned the visits of our neighbours, and lunched or dined with them, as the case might be. In all, four or five families were dotted about the hills within visiting distance, and visiting is the business of life in the Jamaican hills. Not by any means the formal visits which bore us at home—quite the contrary. Almost every lady in the hills has her 'day,' when all her neighbours assemble, and the officers come up from the Camp, and down from New-Castle. Tea and iced claret-cup are liberally provided; and the elders lounge and chat, and the young folks flirt and play tennis, and occasionally get up an impromptu dance.

But in addition to this, Jamaican hill-ladies are almost always really at home; and the intimacy between them, on account of their isolation, is much more familiar than is usual in England. So if Mrs A. feels bored, she slips on a riding-skirt, and goes over to lunch and spend the afternoon with Mrs B., leaving word for her husband to call for her when he comes up from the plains. And Mrs B. in her turn does the same. Then a house in the Jamaican hills is seldom or never without one or more guests. Every house has spare rooms; and the mode of living is so simple, that the addition of one or two to the family circle reckons but little in point of cost. Expensive luxuries are unobtainable, and the ordinary articles of consumption are fairly cheap. Beef is sixpence, mutton one shilling, per pound, all the year round; while vegetables, fruit, &c., which, as I mentioned before, are brought to the door for sale by the country-people, are very cheap. Besides, official salaries in Jamaica are not large, so that any attempt at extravagance or display would be looked on with little favour in the hills. Nothing pleases a lowland young lady so much as an invitation to spend some time in the hills. Life there has a picnic flavour about it, which is a delicious relief to the dust and glare and monotony of the plains, so that invitations are freely given and gladly accepted.

Strenuous attempts are made, and in most cases successfully, to prevent the intrusion of the demon *ennui*. Every man-of-war which touches at Port-Royal has invitations freely accorded to its officers; then a dance is arranged, and young ladies come riding over the hills for miles to enjoy it. The soldiers flock down from New-Castle. Everybody has one or more guests billeted on him, and dancing is kept up with a spirit unknown at home; so that life in the Jamaican hills rubs on not uncomfortably on the whole. One day was spent in an

expedition to Flamstead, the Governor's hill-residence. It being a two hours' ride, first downhill to Gordontown, and then up the other side of the valley, we started at eleven A.M., the Major, Mrs Edgeware, and myself, and reached Flamstead about one P.M. The house is a small unpretending place, but commands magnificent views of the bay. We were hospitably welcomed by Sir Anthony Musgrave the Governor, and Lady Musgrave; and after luncheon, strolled over to Little Flamstead, the hill residence of the Commodore of the station, which is close by.

A very pretty little place is Flamstead the Lesser, with its flower-garden surrounded by a fence all straggling over with jessamine on one side, and its neat kitchen-garden on the other. In the former, the Commodore pointed out to us an English holly, the only one in the island. In front of the cottage is a heliograph, with which the Commodore can communicate by flashing signals with Port-Royal and the ships in the harbour. Everything inside and outside the cottage was trim and orderly and ship-shape, with the trimness and order which sailors' hands only can produce. Meantime, as we stood admiring the view, heavy clouds from the north-east came pouring up over the Guava Ridge. In less than ten minutes they had swept up and completely covered the hill on which we were standing. The splendid scenery faded away like a mirage, and a dense cold mist surrounded us.

'We had best be off,' said the Major; 'we are going to catch it on the way home.'

A low muttering of thunder was making itself heard as we put on our waterproofs and rode out of the gate.

'The seasons [meaning the rainy seasons, which occur in May and October] are coming, I am sure,' said Mrs Edgeware. 'And we shall be all mewed up in the damp for a week, with nothing to do but to stove our clothes.'

'Here it comes!' said Charley.

Nearly a hundred yards in front, we could see the rain as it came rushing on us, and hear the huge drops, big as half-crowns, pattering on the leaves and branches. Such rain I never saw. In an instant our ponies were as wet as if they had been dragged through a river. Waterproofs, umbrellas, nothing could resist it. It insinuated itself through my umbrella, and came trickling over the peak of my white helmet. It saturated my waterproof, and came pouring over my knees down into my boots. Another moment and the seat of my saddle was as wet as a sponge. Mrs Edgeware's pretty hat and feather were now a mass of dripping pulp. The rain swept away the surface of the road till it resembled the bed of a mountain torrent. On we bumped in silent misery, the cat-like ponies making play over every level yard of ground, and the thunder rumbling and roaring nearer and nearer every minute. At Gordontown, the slender stream we had crossed in the morning was now a raging yellow flood.

'Another twenty minutes will do it,' said the Major, cantering over the bridge; 'and then for a B. and S. and a tub.—By Jove!' The exclamation was caused by a vivid flash of lightning, accompanied by a most appalling clap of thunder. Flash and report were absolutely simultaneous. Across the hideous steely glare I saw the forked

lightning flickering like a silver ribbon. As for the thunder, it was simply one dull crash, as if a hammer had struck the mountain; and then all was still save the fierce rushing of the rain. I confess I was startled; but as my companions did not seem to mind it much, I said nothing. A quarter of an hour later, we got home in a forlorn state.

All that day (Thursday), Friday, and Saturday it poured without a moment's intermission. Saturday night was signalled by a thunder-storm which threw into the shade everything of the kind I had previously experienced. From about ten P.M., when we went to bed, the thunder and lightning never ceased for a moment. About twelve at night I had to get up to close the windows, as the rain was beating in through the venetians; and I confess I didn't like it. The windows of my room looked over the Dutch garden; and in the blinding glare of the successive waves of green, blue, and silver flame that swept across it, every leaf on the bushes, every pebble on the walks, was plainly visible. Through the whole of that awful night of Saturday, October 11, 1879—a night that will long be remembered in Jamaica—over all the hideous din of the thunder could be heard the rain, falling ceaselessly, like a shower of bullets, on the shingled roof.

I was roused from a troubled sleep next morning by Charley coming into my room about six A.M. The Major's thick boots were covered with mud. 'This is a bad business,' said he.

'What's the matter?' I asked.

'Come out and see,' replied he, 'as soon as you get on your clothes.'

In a few minutes I joined him on the lawn, where I found him talking to a gray-bearded man, the Road Superintendent of the district. Here the damage done was plain enough. I have mentioned that a border of high lemon-grass ran all round the tennis-ground. From this border the bank ran sharply down to the road which wound beneath. For about twenty yards the whole face of the bank had slipped down. Part rested in confused heaps on the road beneath; and in one place the road itself had given way under the weight, and a yawning chasm, nearly five yards across, gaped in its place. On the other side, another landslip had swept away the road to the church, leaving only a narrow ledge about eighteen inches wide, so that access to Craigton was cut off on both sides.

'I have known the country for forty years,' said Mr E—, the Superintendent, 'and I never saw anything like this. It looks as if a waterspout had passed over the district. Every bridge on the Hope River is swept away. New-Castle is cut off; so we have been obliged to get the Major's leave for the mules with the supplies to pass through here.' He pointed out to me, as he spoke, a number of natives who were billing out a path through the brushwood on the far side of the landslip, while a train of laden mules, with supplies for New-Castle, waited patiently behind.

'We're not done with it yet,' said Charley, pointing to the heavy masses of cloud that were sweeping up from the west over the Guava Ridge mountain. 'However, we will go in and get breakfast.—I must make my way down to Gordontown,' he added to me; 'so, if you don't mind a ducking, you might come with me.'

As we were turning towards the house, we heard the rattle of hoofs, and saw an officer in high boots and white helmet cantering down the church road. The white helmet appeared and disappeared as the rider cantered down the winding road.

'I wonder, does he know the road is gone?' said Mr E—.

He did not, apparently, for he turned the last corner at a sharp canter; and there, ten yards before him, yawned the gulf where the road had been. The pony was pulled sharply up, and the young officer rode slowly forward. I have said that where the road was swept away, a narrow ledge about three yards long, and certainly not more than a couple of feet wide, had been left, which ran across the face of the landslip. Below this ledge, the ground, covered with the débris of the slip, fell away in an almost sheer descent to the bed of the torrent, at least three hundred feet below. Without hesitating a second, the officer kicked his feet out of the stirrups, and rode across, his pony stepping slowly and gingerly, with his nose close to the ground. From our point of view, unable as we were from the distance to see the ledge, the effect was most singular; he seemed to be riding in mid-air across the white face of the cliff. It appeared to be, and I have no doubt was, a horribly dangerous feat.

'It's Martin of the —,' said the Major. 'He is Acting Commissary for New-Castle,' and presently Mr Martin rode in.

'There's the deuce and all to pay, Major,' said Mr Martin, throwing the reins on the neck of his reeking pony. Slightly made, and under the middle size, was Mr Martin, with clear-cut features and resolute blue eyes. Soaked and bedraggled as he was, he looked a soldier every inch. 'The deuce and all to pay,' he repeated, jumping off his pony and unclasping his heavy cloak. 'All our supplies are cut off. I have been out since four A.M. Tried to reach the Gardens by the military road; but every bridge is gone, and in places the whole road. I sent a messenger across the hills to tell them to send up some mules this way, and I see your road is gone too. I must get down to Gordontown. Those lazy blacks will do nothing, and we'll have the men living on preserved salmon and sardines.'

'I'm going after breakfast,' replied the Major; 'so come in and have something to eat, and we'll start together.—Would you like to come?' he added to me. 'You'll get frightfully drenched, mind.'

I agreed to go; and we went into breakfast.

The most extraordinary reports were coming in, Mrs Edgeware told us. The entire village of Gordontown was said to have been swept away; and there was a ghastly rumour that at a place called Dry River, upwards of twenty native women and children had been drowned when attempting to cross, by the sudden rise of the river. The black butler confirmed these melancholy tidings. 'Hall wash away,' he observed with a gloomy shake of the head.

We were soon in the saddle, making our way down the new path the natives had billed out for the commissariat mules. The rain had begun to fall heavily again, and the going was awful, the ponies sinking above their fetlocks in the soaking, slippery clay. Charley had provided me with a huge pair of overalls, reaching to mid-thigh; and

with those and my waterproof, I entertained hopes, alas! vain hopes, of remaining dry. Our way lay down the road up which I had ridden on the day of my arrival; but it was scarcely recognisable. The entire surface had been swept away. Long stretches, strewn with boulders of all shapes and sizes, alternated with regions of slippery, viscous mud; the whole scored with ragged channels, through which torrents of yellow muddy water were pouring. In one place, a torrent from the hills, catching the road on the inner side of a bend, had scooped it out like a cheese, scarcely leaving room to pass. The great pit, some twenty feet long by fifteen deep, shewed the force of the water. Everywhere appeared traces of the awful damage done by the flood, from the huge landslip which had carried away half the side of a mountain, to the tiny one that had merely wrecked some poor black fellow's provision-garden.

As we got lower down, we could hear the roar of the two rivers—the Hope River, which rises near New-Castle; and the Flamstead River, which rises in the Port-Royal mountains, and which unite their waters about a mile higher up, as they thundered along the valley and past the pretty village of Gordontown. At last, a turn in the road gave us a view of the huge yellow flood, nearly a hundred yards wide, and sweeping down with a fury it is impossible to describe. Of the pretty wooden bridge we had crossed on the previous Thursday, when visiting Flamstead, not a trace was left, except a break in the surface of the water, marking the position of a submerged pier. A few minutes more, and we reached the foot of the hill. Such a scene of ruin and desolation as then presented itself to us, I never saw before! The main road to Kingston here runs for more than a mile along the bottom of the valley, having steep hills on one side, and the river on the other. About a hundred yards from the Police Barrack, an immense landslip had taken place, covering the road to a depth of thirty or forty feet. Scrambling over this—we had left our ponies at the Barrack—we came presently to an enormous chasm, big enough to hold a coach-and-four, through which a furious torrent was pouring. A small watercourse, which ran down the hillside at this point, had become so swollen in a few hours by the deluges of rain, that it had burst right through the road into the river beyond, causing the ruin we saw.

Crossing by a couple of planks, we went on to the place where the river is dammed for the Kingston water-supply. Here the road, following the course of the river, bends sharply to the left under the overhanging hills. The dam, crossing the river, strikes perpendicularly the centre of the curve. It was here the worst damage was done. The outworks of the dam had been broken down, and lay about in confused and shattered masses; while at the further end of the curve, the road, for a distance of fifty yards, had been completely destroyed, and the angry flood was washing the base of the hill.

Here we met General —, the Director of Roads, who confirmed all the worst rumours we had heard. The disaster at Dry River, he told us, had not been exaggerated. A number of the country-people—upwards of thirty, he said—men, women, and children, had reached the river on their way home from market. The river was then

running in a wide and rapid but not very deep stream. An island lay in the centre. As the river was evidently rising rapidly, the unfortunate people determined to attempt to cross before the further rise of the water should render it impossible. With considerable delay and difficulty they reached the island in the centre in safety, with their mules and donkeys. Once there, they found, to their dismay, that further progress was impossible. Between the island and the far side of the river, the swollen waters were rushing down in a volume and with a fury which nothing could resist. Worst of all, their retreat was cut off. The stream they had crossed had risen behind them; and there the unhappy people were, cooped up between two raging torrents, on an island the area of which was rapidly diminishing under the action of the water. The scene was appalling. Darkness was coming on; the rain falling in torrents. Wild shrieks for help, agonised prayers to heaven, went up from the helpless crowd of blacks, huddled together on that tiny speck of land in the midst of the waters. Some few attempted to escape by swimming, but were swept away like straws, and drowned. Higher and higher rose the waters, blacker and blacker the darkness that hid from the horrified spectators on the banks the ghastly scenes on the island. Yet the piercing screams of women, the hoarser cries of men, were still heard at intervals, as group after group of the helpless people was swept away. At last, about half-past eight P.M. one appalling cry went up out of the darkness; and then, save the rush and roar of the angry waters, all was still. Not one had survived. This had taken place on the previous Saturday; and all through Sunday, the swollen and distorted bodies of the dead were being washed up, some miles below the place where the disaster had happened.

Immense loss of life and property also took place along the Yallahs Valley, which runs down to the sea east of the Flamstead Hills. Unlike most valleys in Jamaica, which narrow down to mere gullies, the Yallahs Valley, through nearly all its extent, widens out into a succession of more or less rugged plains, through which the Yallahs River makes its way to the sea. Years ago, probably after heavy rains, the river changed its channel, forming a completely new one. On the ground left dry by the river, numbers of natives had built cottages. About half-way down, a neat meeting-house had been built, with a graveyard hard by, and the whole place was as flourishing a settlement as any on the island.

On that dreadful Saturday, the river began to rise about five P.M. Many of the women and some of the men were away at market. In some cottages only the children were left. The river, draining as it does an immense tract of country, rose with frightful rapidity. The poor people returning from work or market, found themselves confronted by a raging flood where they had crossed dry-shod in the morning. Filling the entire width of the valley, the swollen waters rushed on to the sea, bearing with them trees, cattle, horses, sheep, chests of drawers and other articles of furniture. There was no room for doubt. The river had swept the valley clean. Even the very soil of the graveyard had been torn up, and the coffins, with their occupants, washed out by the water.

'Not to speak of the loss of life,' said the General in conclusion, 'I don't believe a hundred and twenty thousand pounds will cover the damage that has been done.'

Making our way back to the Police Barrack, we got our ponies and rode a short distance up the road towards the New-Castle military road. Here it was the same story of ruin and devastation. The Post-office, the posting-stables, everything had been carried away by the furious torrent that rushed by, and in some places over the road, even though it had fallen considerably within the last few hours.

At the picket-house, where a small detachment from New-Castle is always stationed, we found Martin sitting on his pony among a crowd of blacks, and in a towering rage. A lazy-looking half-caste, one of the army contractors, was explaining to him how utterly impossible it was to forward the meat supplies to New-Castle. He had offered a dollar—two dollars; but the men would not go, the roads were so bad. He could do no more.

'All right,' broke in Martin sharply; 'then I must try.—Simpson!' (this to a smart corporal who stood by at 'attention'), 'I want twenty men. A pound each a day. We will charge it to Mr —, who has contracted to forward supplies, rain or no rain.'

The corporal saluted, produced a pocket-book; and in less than five minutes had twenty names down, to the dismay of the contractor.

'Start them at once, Simpson,' said Martin. 'There is a path billed through Craigton, which Major Edgeware allows us to use.—Rather a sell for our commissariat friend,' he observed to us as we rode away. 'He could have got those fellows easily for ten shillings a head, but was too lazy to try. Now he will have to pay a pound.'

There being nothing more to see in this direction, we turned homeward; and after the usual amount of stumbling and slipping and sliding, found ourselves at Craigton about one P.M., very wet, but with an awful appetite for lunch.

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE OF THE BAR.

SOME little time ago we published in this *Journal* an account of the preliminary formalities required by the Inns of Court of students desirous of being called to the Bar. In the present article we propose to furnish our readers with some information as to the unwritten law known as Professional Etiquette by the practising members of the profession. We may premise that to very few of such members is this law in its entirety even approximately known—indeed many of the customs which have acquired the force of law are of merely local application, some of them obtaining within the limits of one circuit and not of another, while others are peculiar to the Chancery as distinguished from the Common-law Bar.

Most people are aware that England is divided into circuits or districts, to which the judges—Justices in Eyre, as they were formerly called—make periodical visits, for the purpose of hearing such civil causes as may originate in the district, and of trying those prisoners who may have been committed for trial within its limits. As a matter of fact the new Judicature Act has made it possible for civil causes originating in any part of England

to be tried within the boundaries of any circuit, or in London or Westminster at the option of the plaintiff. But this is not material to our present subject. Now, although in law there is no reason why any barrister should not attend any and every circuit, the unwritten code to which we have adverted limits his choice to one; nor is he permitted to change the circuit to which he may have first attached himself, after the lapse of three years. After a student is called, one of his first proceedings is to choose a circuit; and having fixed upon one, in which he has, or imagines he has, some influence or connection, he applies to the 'Junior' of such circuit for instructions as to the steps necessary in order to be elected to the Bar-mess. These steps vary in some slight particulars in different circuits; but as a rule, the candidate for admission has to get his name proposed by a Queen's Counsel and seconded by a Junior—that is, a member of the 'utter' Bar, both being members of the mess. He has then to put in an appearance at one of the assize towns, to give the electors an opportunity of seeing him in person; and is afterwards balloted for in the usual way. As we have before mentioned, if he have been a member of another circuit for more than three years, or if he have been called for more than three years without having been elected member of any circuit, the circumstance is generally considered fatal; and his election will not be proceeded with. But otherwise, if nothing is known against the candidate professionally or socially, his election is usually a matter of course. Members of the Chancery Bar do not go on circuit.

Once elected a member of the circuit, the barrister becomes amenable to the jurisdiction of 'Mr Junior' for the time being, who is as a rule the youngest or one of the youngest members of the circuit, and whose duty it is to collect the fees, to make arrangements for the mess-dinners, including the giving out to the mess-butler of the wine, which is usually the property of the mess, and kept at the various hotels on the circuit frequented by the Bar. Formerly, a barrister when on circuit was obliged to take up his abode in lodgings; and it was a professional misdemeanour, only expiable by a fine, to enter an hotel when it was thought that he might come in contact with solicitors, and so gain an unfair advantage over his brethren. This rule has, however, been of late years relaxed; but the laws against 'hugging a solicitor' are still in force; and it is an indictable offence for a barrister to be seen in the coffee-room of the hotel at which he is staying, or to occupy any other than a private room. A solicitor may be 'hugged' in various ways; but any approach to so reprehensible a practice, should it come to the knowledge of the Attorney or Solicitor General of the circuit, is pretty sure to result in the prosecution of the offender at the Bar of Mr Junior. These prosecutions are conducted after dinner on what is called 'Grand-night,' when one of the officers in question, a member of the junior Bar of longer standing than the Junior, rises and calls the attention of Mr Junior and Mr Senior—the latter the senior Queen's Counsel present—to the misdemeanour complained of, mentioning the offender by name, who has the right of being heard in vindication of his conduct. Mr Junior then takes the opinion of the mess, and pronounces sentence by fining the delinquent, sometimes

in money, but usually in wine, varying from a single bottle to one, two, or even three dozen.

The offences cognizable by the court are numerous. Entering an assize town before commission-day—the day, namely, when the judges enter the town and ‘open the commission’—visiting or walking with a solicitor; attending another circuit without a special fee—fifty guineas for a ‘silk,’ and twenty for a ‘stuff gown’—travelling by railway in other than a first-class carriage; being seen in any other part of the assize court than that set apart for counsel; even a mispronounced word ignorantly or accidentally let fall in the course of a speech—we once knew an eminent Queen’s Counsel fined for calling a bicycle a *bi-cycle*—are all indictable. Mr Junior is also a stern censor in minor matters of etiquette, and will when necessary call the attention of some unconscious neophyte to the fact that the coat worn by him in court is not of the authorised and conventional black, or that he has forgotten to put on his bands or to take off his necktie.

At the expiration of the assize, Mr Junior’s duties terminate *pro tem.*; but there are still sundry rules and regulations which the unwritten code compels members of the Bar to comply with. For instance, it is a thing not for a moment to be thought of that a Queen’s Counsel should open—as it is termed—the pleadings; and hence the necessity that every ‘silk,’ at anyrate when briefed for the plaintiff, should have a junior ‘with him,’ in order that the latter may at the commencement of the proceedings state to the judge and jury the names of the parties, the allegations and contentions raised by each, and the issue which is sought to be tried. These pleadings also which consist in the statement of claim of the plaintiff, the statement of defence of the defendant, the reply, rejoinder, surrejoinder, rebutter, and surrebutter—the forms subsequent to the reply being seldom needed in ordinary actions—must be drawn by a junior, it being quite beneath the dignity of a Queen’s Counsel to intermeddle in such matters, except when specially called in on consultation. Attendances in judges’ chambers with reference to preliminary or, as they are called in legal parlance, interlocutory questions are confined to ‘stuff gownsmen,’ the duty of the ‘silks’ being discharged in court only.

The important matter of fees is also regulated by the same code. No counsel, however newly called, can, excepting in one almost obsolete matter, take a fee of less than one guinea, nor is he permitted to take that without an additional fee of half-a-crown for his clerk, whether he be provided with such a functionary or not; to do so would be to undersell his brethren. Up to five guineas, it should be observed, the clerk’s fee is half-a-crown; when the barrister’s fee is over five guineas, the clerk’s fee is usually five per cent. on his master’s, unless when the client seeks a ‘conference,’ in which case the clerk is entitled to five shillings, although his master may get only one guinea. This extra honorarium is supposed to be necessitated by the extra trouble incurred by the clerk in ushering the client into his master’s presence. The practice of paying a conference fee is now almost invariable when a brief is delivered for argument in court, and that whether such conference ever takes place or not; and so when a barrister receives a brief in court

with so small a fee even as two guineas, he usually gets an extra guinea for ‘conference.’ Where two barristers are employed on the same side, the leader gets in addition to the fee on his brief, two guineas for ‘consultation’ with his junior, who gets one, and in this case the conference is omitted. The fee is marked on the outside of the brief; and it is worthy of note that whilst a Queen’s Counsel notifies the receipt by putting his initials against the sum paid, the junior must write his full name, or the taxing-master will hesitate to allow it to the solicitor, on taxing the costs.

Frequenter of the law-courts will have noticed that while some barristers, or their clerks for them, carry red bags, others carry blue ones. The latter colour is the original one. But when the rank of Queen’s, or rather King’s Counsel was first instituted in the time of King Charles II.—or as some say, later still—to each holder of the dignity three red bags were given, in which to carry His Majesty’s briefs, and also the privilege of granting one in each year to a stuff gownsman presumably his junior in his official work. Now, as is well known, any member of the Bar in large practice will on application to the Lord Chancellor be granted sooner or later this titular honour, which carries with it the right of precedence over all members of the ‘utter’ Bar as well as over all sergeants-at-law not possessed of a patent of precedence. The practice of giving away a red bag annually to some member of the junior Bar, is still continued. In the Common-law courts, although red bags are permitted, the bringing a blue bag into court is looked upon as a grave breach of professional etiquette; but the custom does not obtain in the Chancery division, where the introduction of blue bags is of common occurrence. It is not generally known or, rather perhaps we should say, remembered, that one of the best known and indeed the *only* distinguishing feature in the garb of a barrister, namely his wig, is but a remnant of a bygone fashion; and that until the time of Charles II., when every gentleman wore false hair, counsel learned in the law were in no way distinguishable from their fellow-subjects in this particular. The much older degree of sergeants-at-law it is true wore the coif; and this covering for the head is still typified by the little black patch on the top of a sergeant’s wig, and of those of such of the judges as were admitted to Sergeants’ Inn on their elevation to the Bench. This ancient legal dignity is, however, now apparently doomed to extinction; but so conservative is the law—or rather the law’s wig-makers—that a circular patch, but of the same colour and material as the wig itself, is still shewn on the wigs of those judges who have been made since the Judicature Act rendered their admission to the grade of Sergeant no longer necessary. Purely matter of custom, however, as is the wearing of the wig, there is little doubt that no judge of the High Court of Judicature would for a moment allow himself to be addressed by a barrister devoid of that decoration; and we think it more than possible that no habitual criminal would consider himself to be legally sentenced except by a judge similarly adorned.

We might extend this paper almost indefinitely were we to enumerate all the laws and customs of more or less perfect obligation which obtain in

the profession; such as the proper proportion which a junior's fee should bear to that of his leader, the still vexed question of 'refreshers,' and half a hundred others of a similar nature; but we think we have said enough to give our readers some idea of the species of trades-unionism which characterises the higher branch of the profession. There is, however, one rule which does honour to the guild of Barristers, and which we are glad to believe is seldom or never broken—namely, never to state in court as a fact, that which the speaker knows to be untrue. The judges implicitly recognise this rule, and never hesitate for a moment to rely on any statement made by counsel which he alleges to be within his own knowledge.

THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

My first quest next morning on leaving the apartment where I had slept, was for the purpose of ascertaining whether my bedroom had been again entered after I had left it on the previous evening. I unlocked the door, and cautiously looked in. Enough light came through between the drawn curtains to shew me that the room was apparently as I left it. I advanced to the window and found the thread there, unbroken, and evidently untouched. I must confess I felt somewhat disappointed. My fears had probably exaggerated my conceptions of the danger, and I had anticipated a second visit as more than probable. After thinking, however, I came to the conclusion that it was better as it was. Had my strange visitor for any purpose entered my room a second time, and found that I had quitted it, the effect might have been the reverse of favourable to a discovery of the trickery, which discovery could best be forwarded by my making as little change in my usual habits as possible. It was not improbable, seeing that no suspicion had been aroused by the knowledge that I had changed my sleeping apartment, that the 'ghost' might be emboldened to pay me a visit on the following night; and by that time I hoped to be able to arrange for the interception of my strange visitor, and the detection of the trick.

In the course of the morning, I had made up my mind how I should proceed. Mrs Weevil generally left after breakfast on her errands to the neighbouring village or elsewhere, not generally returning for a few hours; and I thought this a good time to obtain an interview with Andrew the old gardener, who, I saw, was engaged trimming the walks in front of the door. I had no doubt now that what I had seen had been also appearing to the servants who had so suddenly departed on the previous evening; and I had no doubt also that Andrew knew the whole story about the ghost having been again seen in the house. I opened the parlour window, and spoke with him over the balcony. 'Will you come up-stairs, Andrew? I should like to speak to you.'

He stood for a moment in hesitation, scratching his head. I think he would have preferred anything to entering my house at that moment; but evidently he did not see his way to refusing. A few moments later, he was in the drawing-room.

'Andrew,' I began, with some intentional solemnity of manner, 'you see the position I am in.'—His expression indicated that he considered the position an exceedingly unpleasant one.—'The story has got about,' I went on, 'that this house is haunted.'—He turned pale.—'You think it is haunted?' I asked, looking at him fixedly.

He hesitated for a few moments, shook his head slowly, and succeeded finally in saying: 'What is folks to think, ma'am?'

'I acknowledge,' I answered, 'that the thing has a queer look. When people appear, and vanish as suddenly as they came, it is difficult to think of them as creatures of flesh and blood like ourselves.'

'Tain't possible-like,' was Andrew's comment; and I observed that with the words, his face took a more healthy hue. The quiet tone I had assumed reassured him. Ghosts, when they can be reasoned about, lose half their terrors.

'No,' I answered him; 'it is not possible. But Andrew, if we look at these things from another point of view'—

'Be there another?' he eagerly asked, as I paused to allow him time for expression of opinion.

'Yes,' I said; 'there is another. Before I believe in your interpretation, Andrew—before I believe it possible that spirits can wander about the world for no other reason than to frighten people, I must test mine.'

His eyes, awakened to new interest, were looking at mine inquiringly.

I explained at once. 'What I mean is this. I suspect a trick. Somebody has a spite against the owner of this house—somebody has an interest in keeping it empty.'

Andrew was naturally shrewd. As I spoke, there came into his face a new look of keenness. He smiled. 'There has been queer things done,' he observed, with a cautious impartiality.

'You have been here some weeks,' I said. 'Have you heard anything during that time about this house, about the people who own it? I am told they lived here once.'

Thus stimulated, Andrew told me that the house and grounds had originally belonged to Lord B—, father of the present lord, whose Park was commanded by our front-windows. On the marriage of a favourite sister with Mr Roupel, a man somewhat beneath her in position, he gave her the house. Here the married pair lived, in much unhappiness it was said; and here their only child, a daughter, was born. After running through his wife's money, the husband died. When left alone, the widow, and her now grown-up daughter, determined to let their house, and live abroad. The rent of the furnished house, with its excellent garden, would bring them in an income sufficient to enable them to live quietly in some foreign town. But while this project was being discussed, the widow died, suddenly and mysteriously. An inquest was held over her; for strange suspicions were circulated abroad. The verdict was, that she had died of the family complaint, heart-disease. But there were those who still spoke mysteriously about the circumstances of the death, and declared that the poor lady had met with foul-play.

Now, this was the germ of the ghost-story; for

it was said far and near, that Mrs Roupel, if she had really been murdered—and murdered by her own child, as some dared to whisper—would never rest in her grave. And when singular appearances came and went, and strange sounds were heard in the house, now empty save for an ancient housekeeper, the suspicion, scarcely spoken of at first above the breath, so dark it was and monstrous, was by-and-by openly discussed.

On this part of the story old Andrew was very ready to dilate. He warmed to the theme indeed, and would willingly have given me, had I desired it, a full and particular account of the various people who from time to time had been driven from the premises. But I, holding still to my point, that *trick* had to do with it, restrained his flow of language, and endeavoured, by close questioning, to find out what he knew about the daughter of Mrs Roupel, who, if his story were true, was the present owner of the haunted house.

I elicited the following facts. Miss Roupel was nineteen years of age about the period of her mother's death. She was then a young lady of high spirit and cheerful temper; she was accomplished, witty, and unusually attractive in appearance. Thus, in spite of the drawbacks entailed by poverty, and a sad melancholy mother, the young lady was not without suitors. The suit of one of these was, according to her mother and herself—they remembered their old antecedents and were proud—little short of an impertinence; for the man was neither more nor less than Lord B——'s house-steward. The old housekeeper, to whom, before he bestowed the house upon his sister, the old lord had apportioned two rooms, was Mrs Weevil, the steward's mother.

It was natural that Miss Roupel, niece of his former employer, should reject his suit with disdain. It was perhaps no less natural that the rejection, imbibed by contempt, should sink deeply into the steward's soul. The fact was that from the day when he was forbidden the house where his mother lived, the young man changed. People spoke of his black looks, of his hard ways, of his cruel cynical speeches, and some predicted a bad end for him.

Meanwhile, Miss Roupel, now left alone by her mother's death, married Mr Egerton, a man, from a monetary point of view, scarcely more eligible than the steward. He was a Lieutenant in the navy; but as he had nothing in the world but his pay, they carried out Mrs Roupel's plan of letting their house furnished, believing it would bring them in a sufficient income to enable the young wife to live in comfort while her husband was away from her. But, as Andrew remarked, if this was her belief, she must have been often 'sore pinched,' for the house could have brought in very little.

I thanked him for his story. 'Now,' I said, 'you must do something more for me. Go to the village at once. Find the carpenter and blacksmith. Tell them I want them on important business. There must be no delay. I will pay them well for their work. Do you understand?' For the old man was staring at me as if he thought I had taken leave of my senses.

'I understan', he answered slowly. 'But what will you be wanting with them, ma'am?'

'You will know all in good time. They must

bring their tools. Now go, Andrew—go quickly. And mind, Andrew,' I added, 'say nothing to any one of your errand; and bring the joiner and blacksmith in by the back entrance, for I do not wish them to be seen coming here to-day by everybody.'

Notwithstanding these bold words, I must confess that when Andrew started on his message, and I was left alone—for the ayah had gone down to the village—I felt a little uneasy. I did not believe in spiritual presences, but I did believe in wickedness driven to desperation. I was bidding defiance to a foe of whose resources I was utterly ignorant. What if my defiance should be taken up? Mentally, I felt strong enough; physically, I was conscious of being weak; but I set about the performance of my household duties, which occupied me fully till the return of Andrew.

I took him, as also the joiner and blacksmith, into the parlour, and told them my experiences of the previous evening. Andrew exhibited symptoms of alarm; but I found the joiner a sensible man, and inclined, after what I told him, to take a similar view with myself of the situation, namely, that we were being made the subjects of some diabolical trickery, in order to drive us out of the house. He asked about Mrs Weevil, and if I had ever been in her rooms. I said I had not. He proposed at once to visit them. The door of her apartments was, as usual, locked; but the blacksmith had little difficulty in successfully picking the lock, and effecting an entrance for us—Andrew being meanwhile sent to keep a look-out in the garden, that no one approached the house unawares.

There was nothing to attract attention in Mrs Weevil's apartments. The joiner carefully examined them; but no means of egress from either of the rooms could be discovered, save the door by which we had entered, the windows having iron gratings outside. We took the utmost care that nothing was disarranged; and any piece of furniture or apparel which we had occasion to disturb was replaced exactly as found. Previous to this, I should have mentioned, both the joiner and blacksmith had made a particular examination of the bow-window of my bedroom; but had failed to find anything to awaken suspicion in the slightest. Our search had so far been entirely fruitless; and I was beginning to feel more perplexed than ever, as, after what Andrew had told me of Mrs Weevil, and of her son's former relations to the owner of the house, I had somehow begun to connect her in my mind with the mysterious appearances which had given it such a bad fame.

We were in the act of quitting the housekeeper's sitting-room, afraid that she might return before we had had time to refasten the door, when I noticed the blacksmith kneel down on the floor of the inner apartment, and examine the foot of one of the bedposts. It was an ancient Elizabethan, with heavy faded hangings, and stood on a floor covered with a carpet, out of which long use had extracted almost all traces of its original pattern. At a signal, the joiner stooped down beside him; and I then observed that the caster at the foot of the bedpost was glistening with oil, as if it had but recently been lubricated; and we all three then noticed that there was a distinct dark oily

streak along the carpet, as if the bed had been moved forward obliquely for a few feet from where it stood, and then been moved back again. The joiner at once rose; and taking hold of the bed, he found that he could pull it forward easily and without making the slightest noise, till it was about a foot from the wall against which it stood. At this point, we noticed that the bed seemed to dip slightly to one side, as if something were yielding to its weight; and at the same moment we observed a panelling silently open in that part of the wall which had formerly been hid behind the hangings.

I was in a high state of excitement, and with difficulty could suppress my feelings, but stood silent as the two men went round and looked into the opening thus discovered. They asked for a candle, which I presently brought them; when we found that the recess was a small place, about five feet high and two deep, and that it was formed of solid mason-work on all sides but the front. A box, large enough to fill the whole space of the bottom, was attached to the wall by strong iron staples, as if to prevent its removal; but curiously enough, the box itself was not locked, though supplied with a hasp and padlock. The lid was at once lifted; when we saw stuffed into it, as if hurriedly, a mass of white garment, which we found to be an old chasuble or surplice, that must have formed at one time part of the ceremonial robes of a priest. We brought it forth to the light, and examined it; and there, in the skirt of the garment, we found that a piece had been torn out, which was exactly fitted by the bit of white embroidered cloth which I had picked up in my bedroom on the previous evening. This was evidence indisputable that, whoever or whatever my ghostly visitor was, here at least was the garment that had been worn on that occasion; the more so, that attached to the upper part of the garment was a kind of hood which, when drawn over the head and face, would give in a dim and uncertain light the grim aspect that I had seen on the previous evening. I felt within me a burning indignation that for years the peace and happiness of successive families in the house should have been destroyed by the wretched trickery of this depraved old woman, in her malicious desire to injure the young lady who owned the house, by depriving her of the income that would otherwise have been derived from it.

My first impulse was to leave things as they were in the apartment till the arrival of the old hag, and confront her at once with the evidences we had discovered of her malevolent practices; but on a second examination of the box, it was found that it contained a false bottom, easily removed, under which were found a pair of loaded pistols. This struck us as being scarcely in keeping with the idea that Mrs Weevil alone was cognisant of the mischievous operations which had been carried on here for so many years. These were rather the weapons of a person who was both able and willing to use them should an emergency offer. And what was still more puzzling, while we had thus far discovered the means by which the ghostly reputation of the house had been maintained, there was as yet no trace of the manner in which access was gained, either to the bedroom which I occupied, or to any other parts

of the house which had been so mysteriously visited. In these circumstances, it was agreed at once to replace everything as we had found them, except that the blacksmith took the precaution of drawing the charge out of both pistols, stuffing the barrels afterwards to the required depth with paper, so that, on being probed, they might still appear as if loaded. This done, the bed was moved back to its place, when the panelling of itself closed as before. We then left the apartment, the door of which was, though not without some difficulty, so fastened as not readily to excite the woman's suspicion that it had been tampered with.

It was now two hours after noon, and Mrs Weevil might return at any moment. The two men therefore departed, but first arranging with me that they should return after dusk, bringing the village constable along with them, to await with me the events of the evening; as I felt certain somehow that the 'ghost' would again appear, with the object of driving me from the house, as other tenants had been driven before.

Like his namesake in *Rob Roy*, the old gardener Andrew was not a very good keeper of secrets; hence it was proposed that the joiner and blacksmith should take him along with them to the village, and keep him under surveillance till the evening. I was glad when I saw them all out of the place, without, so far as I knew, being seen by any one; and still more glad when the ayah shortly afterwards returned with the children, as I could not help feeling timorous and alarmed in the house by myself, considering what we had discovered, and especially what we had failed to discover, namely, how the person playing the ghost could obtain access to different parts of the house so freely as report represented, and as I had myself in one instance painfully experienced.

THE LANDSLIP AT NYNEE TAL.

A CORRESPONDENT who has resided for many years at Nynee Tal, sends us the following interesting particulars of the locality, and endeavours to explain how the recent lamentable catastrophe occurred.

'Nynee Tal,' he proceeds to say, 'is the summer resort of the Lieutenant-governor of the North-western Provinces, as Simla is of the Viceroy. He is accompanied thither by his secretariat and the heads of departments. This, together with the great natural beauty of the place attracting other visitors, causes it to be thronged with people from May to October. During those months, there must be at least three thousand European residents there.

'With regard to its position, the points needful to state are, that it lies to the north of the province of Rohilkund, which it overlooks; and that it lies on the outer range of the Himalaya; owing to which, the first contact of the great masses of cloud rolling up from the plains, with the high cold mountain range, takes place near it and at it. It derives its name from the lake which is its characteristic and most beautiful feature. *Tal* means a lake, and *Nynee* is the name of the goddess whose temple stands at the head of the

lake. Its various points are from six thousand to eight thousand feet above sea-level. A horse-shoe lengthened out and the points brought close together, would give an idea of the general outline of the valley. Round the horse-shoe are lofty hills; lowest at the points, highest at the top curve. Within the horse-shoe lies the lake, following its form—round at the top, narrowing at the ends, through which is its escape-channel to the plains. The hills at the two sides are very near to the edge of the lake; but at the top of the lake the hills lie at some distance from it. The water horse-shoe coincides with the mountain horse-shoe at the end and at the sides; but there is a considerable interval between the rounded top curves.

'In mentioning the right or left side of the lake, the reader is supposed to be looking up from its lower end, the point of escape for the surplus water. From here, he sees the whole valley before him; and can note that the hills to the left are steep, and in places overhang the water, and are not so much built on as the hillside to the right, which is thickly studded with houses, rising one above another from the margin of the lake to the top of the hill. The steepness of the hills on the one side is due to the fact that their strata dip in a direction contrary to the slope of the hill, their outcrop thus presenting a bold escarpment to the valley; while on the other side, that on which the landslip took place, the more gentle slope of the hills is owing to their being composed of shale, the dip of which coincides with the slope of the hills towards the lake. This latter is a fact to be borne in mind.

'We come now to the head of the lake and the sloping plateau which lies between it and the foot of the hills that complete the barrier. These hills on the left are as before rocky; those on the right composed of a coating of soil with shale below. The drainage of the hills to the left passes into a small deep tarn, and thence into a rivulet which enters the lake at its head. This rivulet brings down a good deal of shingle, and has formed a long flat foreshore near the lake. The drainage from the hills to the right coming down their softer shaly sides, had deposited at the foot of the hills, and stretching up the slope of them to a height of eight hundred or a thousand feet, a great mass of earth and shaly debris, which, owing to previous disintegration, was known as "The Landslip." This is the landslip that has done the damage. The drainage-line referred to enters the lake at its very head. It brings down great masses of shale and shingle, and has formed a long flat foreshore at the head of the lake, which is here very narrow, not more than seven or eight hundred feet across. The foot of The Landslip is separated from the lake by an interval of six or seven hundred feet; at the end below the Victoria Hotel, not more than two hundred feet. The Landslip ascended at first with a gentle slope, which became sharper, as usual, as it got higher

up the hillside. It kept the width of six or seven hundred feet almost up to the top, where it was about two hundred feet. It did not run straight up the plateau mentioned as lying at the head of the lake, but bent round with a gradual curve to the hills to the right, noted as composed of shale, and ran to within a few hundred feet of a gap or dip in the top of them.

'The Landslip rests on a bed of small loose shale. Many springs appear along its sides; and there is one at the top which has cut a channel for itself down the broad flat slope to the lake. The course of this channel varies from year to year. The water is so heavily laden with silt, which is deposited on the slope, that the line of passage of any one year is marked at the end of the next by a mound, and not a hollow. The greater part of the water that falls on The Landslip does not run over it, but sinks into the loose shale-bed. The action that has formed The Landslip goes on every year. The cutting into the hillside above; the fall of the steep sides on each hand; the downward movement of the semi-fluid mass; its loss of velocity on the flat lower slope, and its deposit there in sheets or mounds, are increased with each rainy season—the amount of the action depending on the amount of the rainfall.

'The rainfall at Nynee Tal is very heavy, heavier from peculiar local conditions, than what would be due merely to its position on the outer range of the Himalaya. These conditions have to be noted. The lake is about a mile long and two and a half furlongs broad, with a shore or margin of about a furlong and a half along its right bank. The plateau at the head of the lake is about a mile long. The valley along its bottom lines may be taken, therefore, as two miles long and half a mile broad. The lake is about six thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea; while the tops of the hills round it rise to eight thousand five hundred feet. The highest peak, known as Cheena, is above the head of the lake, beyond the plateau; and it is from its flank The Landslip comes down. At the other end of the lake, where is the opening into the valley, and from where the little river fed by the lake runs out, the descent of the hillside is very sharp. This gap opens at once on the sky region which overhangs the belt of forest-land at the foot of the hills, known from its extreme dampness as the Terai, and the well-watered many rivered plains of Rohilkund. The cloud-masses coming up from the plains pour in at this gap.

'Where the heavy cloud-masses of the monsoons coming up from the ocean strike against mountain ridges, not far from the edge of the sea, they descend in excessive rainfall, which sometimes amounts to three hundred inches, or twenty-five feet, in the year. Where the outer ranges of the Himalaya, bounding the plains of Northern India, rise to great heights, here too the heavy cloud-masses of the monsoons strike and descend in heavy rainfall.

'Nynee Tal is thus situated. Besides, we have here a long narrow deep valley, very damp, owing to its being so much sheltered from the sun, and to the evaporation from the lake, which constitutes the chief portion of its bed. The clouds rest in the valley. Heavy fogs and mists prevail in it for many months, and the rainfall is, for many months, long-continued and heavy. This long

continuance of rain, and prevalence of fogs and mists, have an important bearing on the matter; for they mean great saturation of the soil, unrelieved by the genial drying-power of the sun, the result being that the hillsides are easily moved by any unusual surface disturbance, and may at any moment slip. Thus, then, with long-continued moisture, heavy rainfall, steep hills whose sides are composed of shale, we have a combination that would lead to landslips, gigantic traces of many of which are to be seen on the outer slopes.

To describe now the locality of the accident. At the head of the lake stood the Assembly Rooms, with their ballroom, reading-room, and library. They were built on the very margin of the lake, with a long veranda overhanging the water. On the flat near the head of the lake, cricket and polo were practised. Here also the band played of an evening. Round this end of the lake were the boathouses and landing-stages, the place gay with boats and canoes. Above, in the angle between the rivulet and The Landslip, was the Nynee Tal bazaar. The Mall, or riding-road that goes all round the lake, widened out here, and lay between the foot of The Landslip and the lake. Thus, then, this was the central meeting-place, the pleasure-ground of the European community. It was the focal point of the station. On the flat near the Assembly Rooms, a covered racket court had been built, useless on account of the damp—ominous sign! An enterprising and long resident tradesman of the place, Mr Bell by name, purchased it, however, and converted it into a two-storied shop, being tempted by the advantage of the position, so far as the passing to and fro and concourse of people was concerned. Behind this building, a small public garden was laid out some seven or eight years ago.

Above the head of the lake, and by the side of The Landslip, to the right of it, was a piece of land, on which stood the Victoria Hotel. It stood about two hundred and fifty feet in height above the lake. The land on which it stood was not much higher than The Landslip by its side; and though The Landslip was by its side here, yet, owing to the bend to the right in its course, it soon got above it. There was, however, a point in its course from which the straight line down to the lake lay through the hotel. And, owing to the steep slope, not many hundred feet up its length, the bed of The Landslip would be on a level with the very roof of the hotel. The hotel undoubtedly stood in a risky position with reference to The Landslip; but no actual danger was anticipated from it so near its foot; while the advantages of the site, as being so near the Mall and the head of the lake, were very great.

This Landslip is one of very old standing, and was probably in existence when we first began to settle there. For years it has been one of the marked natural features of the place. It has caused damage in years of heavy rainfall before, though its dangerous action has been chiefly confined to the upper parts of its course. Here it has been working its way steadily up the hillside. Houses that had been built above its influence it was thought, had to be taken down as the chasm gradually worked up to them. But down at the foot of it, the damage seemed confined to a deposit of shale and shingle over the road, which was easily

removed. About eight or ten years ago, however, when I was at Nynee Tal, the fall of debris was very great after heavy rains. The road was covered to a depth of five or six feet, and Mr Bell had to barricade heavily the doors and windows of the lower story of his shop on the side of The Landslip.

Before coming to the consideration of the catastrophe itself, one or two things more have to be noted. There was no cliff overhanging the hotel, or the buildings by the side of the head of the lake. The Assembly Rooms would have been deemed perfectly safe against molestation, from the hillside up which ran The Landslip, though the distance between them was not more than a furlong or eight hundred feet at the most. Above the hotel stood a row of servants' houses, further up the slope and nearer to the hillside.

What recently happened was this. These upper buildings were thrown over and buried by a movement of the land from above. They would of course be the first to suffer. Many natives and one European child were buried under the ruins of the houses and the mass of debris. The hotel itself stood unimpaired, and the occupants escaped in safety. Civil and police officers, and working parties of officers and men from the convalescent barrack at the other end of the lake, were soon at the spot, trying to dig out the buried natives. While engaged in this duty, came the sudden and great movement of the soft hillside which overwhelmed the hotel and those near it; and moving down to the head of the lake with irresistible force, buried the public garden and the road there and destroyed the buildings near it. Among those killed near the hotel were Mr Bell, the tradesman already mentioned, and three of his assistants.

One of those extraordinarily heavy falls of rain of which mention has been made had just occurred. In forty hours altogether, mainly it would appear between Friday evening and that fatal Saturday afternoon, there fell twenty-five inches of rain; equal to the rainfall in England for a whole year. This great fall of rain came in the middle of September, after months of heavy rainfall, of clouds and mist and fog, when the soil had been thoroughly soaked and softened. Any overhanging and exposed portions of the hillside would now be ready to fall. The bed of the great Landslip, and the hillsides along it, would be full of water trying to make its way outwards and downwards; and the shale-bed of The Landslip would be already very near the semi-fluid state.

There was, unhappily, no doubt another extraneous cause besides the rains for the slip at the moment that it took place. Great avalanches have been set in motion by very small causes—the removal of a stone, or even a sound. This great slip must have taken place from inherent causes. But its movement at such a fatal moment was due, doubtless, to the digging operations that were being carried on to extricate the buried natives. That gallant band of Englishmen brought about their death by their own exertions!

That cold ghastly sentence in a recent telegram to the *Times*, that "it would cost twenty thousand pounds to exhume the bodies," brings before us a terrible aspect of the accident. It shows us not only how great was the forward-moved mound of shale and rock and shingle, but that there, in the

middle of the gay and pleasant settlement, under that horrid mound, now lie the bodies of so many members of the small community. It is not like a disaster at the bottom of a mine or at sea, away from sight; there stands the mound, with the men and women under it. This would be terrible anywhere; but more so in a place where people are drawn together in such close bonds of companionship and friendship.'

AN EXPENSIVE HOAX.

THE following account of a hoax played upon me many years ago, may teach a lesson to people who think practical joking capital fun, and make them think twice before they resort to such questionable expedients. I am as fond of a good joke as any one; but I detest hoaxes, which as a rule are 'past a joke,' seeing that in most cases they go far beyond what their perpetrators intended. In the case I am about to narrate, either from false shame or fear, the chief actors let things take their course, without trying or being able to stop them.

It will be within the recollection of residents in China ports some eighteen years ago, with how great an amount of anxiety and expectation the opening of the mighty Yang-tze (the 'river of golden sand') to the vessels of the Western barbarians was looked for by all foreigners living in the far East. After the last Anglo-French Chinese war, which had terminated with the capture of Pe-kin, the Chinese government had been compelled to come to terms with the Western powers; and had granted, however unwillingly, the opening of several northern ports, and the navigation of the Yang-tze above Shang-hae as far as Han-kow. Navigable to good-sized vessels for upwards of two thousand miles from its mouth, it was considered a great boon at the time that even this partial opening of eight hundred and forty miles of the mighty stream had been effected; and the expectations of the advantages to be reaped were raised to a very high pitch.

Shang-hae, the old treaty port at the mouth of the Yang-tze, was of course the most interested in this new state of things, as it was the starting-point of all up-river expeditions; and every mind was filled with the prospects of the large gains to be realised—prospects which unfortunately proved rather fallacious in most cases afterwards. There was, however, one serious drawback to the navigation of the river—its many shifting channels and rapid tides made the ascent a matter of great difficulty to sailing-vessels; and it was obvious that the lion-share of any profit to be made would fall to those fortunate few who either owned steamers or had one at their disposal. The number available was, however, very small, and the rates of freight rose to such an enormous height, that a few up and down trips paid the cost of any good-sized steamer. In anticipation of coming events, I had been lucky enough, in conjunction with a friendly Chinese firm, to secure the purchase of a small American-built river-steamer in Hong-kong, which was to run on the river Yang-tze. Drawing but very little water, it was deemed inexpedient to expose the small craft to the danger of crossing the boisterous China Sea, and though it took a much longer

time, it was determined to make her run up north as close as possible along the coast. All matters connected with the Yang-tze navigation were kept very dark at the time; but this had not prevented something about the purchase and the passage of the little steamer being whispered about—a fact of which I was to become aware soon after.

One evening, late—it was close upon midnight—I was busily engaged in my office in Shang-hae preparing for the outgoing mail, when the office-boy rushed into the room with a letter just delivered. This was a more than unusual proceeding—no foreign mails had arrived, and business communications are not generally made at midnight. I turned the letter rather suspiciously round, for its look was by no means inviting, it being very dirty and well thumbed. Inquiring who had delivered it, I was told that a coolie, apparently in a great hurry, had handed the same to the gatehouse-keeper a few minutes previously—that the man had stated he did not know from whom the letter came, and that no answer was required. There was nothing left but to see what the ominous missive contained; and I was not a little shocked upon reading the following:

Steamer *Phœnix*, 12th March 186-.

DEAR SIR—I regret to have to inform you that we have run upon the North Bank during the last gale, and find ourselves in great danger. We may possibly succeed in getting off, if it ceases to blow hard. Captain S—— is sick in bed, and he has asked me to write to you for assistance.—Your obedient servant,

JOHN S——,
(Chief-officer.)

Rather pretty news that! The whole of the letter, including the writer's signature, whose name, moreover, was unknown to me, was very illegibly written in pencil on a piece of paper, evidently torn from some memorandum book, bearing the marks of hurry and excitement. The dirty look of the outside cover was now somewhat explained—the steamer had probably hailed one of the Chinese junks passing by; and the letter had been forwarded by a Woosung runner—the only curious circumstance being, that this man should not even have waited for payment.

We had had very heavy north-easterly gales for two days past, and the steamer was due at any moment. So far everything seemed correct enough; and Captain S——, though known as one of the best men on the China coast, might as well have met with a mishap as any other. I hardly waited for the morning to take the necessary steps in the matter. It continued to blow very hard, and every moment's delay might render the vessel's position more precarious; so I was on my way before break of day to consult one of our best pilots, an American, whom I knew. The man had only returned during the night, I was told, and was still in bed; but I made him get up at once, shewed the letter to him, and asked his advice.

'That looks very bad,' he said, after perusing the letter, shrugging his shoulders. 'With the wind blowing as it does, the steamer may easily have been driven over the Bank. The only chance that remains is that she may have got into deep water between the North and South Banks. But if she has gone on the latter, I wouldn't give a cent for the hull and all that's in her! If we had

another steamer handy' [the only available tug was just out of port], 'I should ask you to send her down without a moment's delay. As it is, I'll go down there at once, and see what's to be done. My boat is ready; a few good men will soon be picked up, so I shall be off in half-an-hour's time. Meanwhile, you must hope for the best.'

Thanking the brave fellow with all my heart for his readiness, I left him to get ready; and after seeing him go down the river under full sail before the appointed time, I returned home, somewhat calmer.

Thirty-six hours of anxious waiting had gone by, when on the afternoon of the following day, Mr C—— the pilot entered my office. His face boded no good. 'Bad news, sir,' Mr C—— commenced. 'I could find no trace whatever of the *Phoenix*. Heaven knows what has become of her and her crew. We have searched the whole of the outer Bank, and got ourselves upon it; and we only left off when it was found that our boat had sprung a leak in striking, which compelled me to return. There is now but one possibility left—provided the vessel has not gone to pieces ere this—that she, as I told you yesterday, may have got between the two Banks, or is fast on the South Bank. You have now only one course to take. Try and get Captain F—— of the *Dragon*' [the tug before mentioned], 'who has just come into the harbour, to go down again without delay. I will go on board with you at once; and I am sure Captain F—— won't leave you in the lurch in such an emergency.'

This was no sooner said than done. Arriving on board the *Dragon*, we found Captain F—— just on the point of going ashore. A few words sufficed to inform him of the state of things. Although he himself and his crew had hardly had any rest for some days past, he did not hesitate a moment.

'We cannot leave Captain S—— without assistance, if help is still of any earthly use to him. He wouldn't think twice if he was in my place; and the sooner we are off the better. Luckily, we have still got steam, so we will start at once. But you must be prepared for a long bill. You know our charge is fifty taels' [seventeen pounds] 'per hour as long as I am under-weight; and I am not at liberty to reduce the owner's charges.'

Of course I told him that money was of no consideration where the lives of so many people were at stake; and I had the satisfaction to see the *Dragon* steam out of the harbour within a quarter of an hour. The news of the presumed dangerous position of the *Phoenix*, and of the steps taken to assist her, had meanwhile spread all over the foreign settlement; and I had to submit as best I could to the many inquiries and condolences about her probable fate from all sides. Captain S—— was a well-known person in all the China ports, and every one waited anxiously for further news, while his sad end was universally deplored.

In the afternoon of the day following, the *Dragon* was reported in sight; and I was on board before she had dropped anchor. Captain F——, who looked flushed and wearied, had evidently not taken a moment's rest since he had started. He came up to me with a sad face.

'We have not been more fortunate in this attempt than Mr C—— the pilot,' he said.

'There is no vestige of the *Phoenix* to be seen anywhere; if she has really struck there, she must have gone to pieces long ago, and not a soul of her crew has been saved. I have done all in my power, and left nothing undone. We have searched every nook and corner, and went as far as the South Bank; and the worst is, I nearly lost my own steamer, as she struck, and we had all the trouble in the world to get afloat again. I am rather surprised, though, that we have seen no spars or timbers floating about. And that makes me ask you—don't be vexed, but rather a queer thought struck me suddenly when returning—do you know the name of the chief officer of the *Phoenix*?'
I told him I did not.

'And has it never come across your mind (now, just keep quiet), that some one, maybe without considering the consequences, may have written that letter for a hoax?'

'It would be too abominable, Captain F——,' I replied; 'nor can I believe any one would dare to do such a thing.'

'Well, we'll soon see about that. But for your sake and Captain S——'s, I could almost wish that to be the case. Not but that it would give me all the pleasure in the world to horse-whip the writer all round the settlement. You at all events have done your duty; the rest we must leave to the future.'

I left the honest Captain with rather conflicting feelings. Hitherto, I had never dreamt of giving way to any such suspicion, as he had done; but the more I thought of all the circumstances connected with the delivery of the mysterious letter, the more I felt inclined to admit there might be something in the view he took of the affair. The first thing I did on reaching home was to try and decipher the very illegibly written signature of the name, to which as yet I had paid but little attention. Now, with roused suspicions, I looked at it in a different light; and I succeeded at last, with a deal of trouble, in linking the single characters together. The result was *Snooks*—JOHN SNOOKS. Now, although the chief-officer's name, for all I knew to the contrary, really might have been Snooks—a very low one, it must be admitted—still this discovery could not but fail to increase any suspicions as to the genuineness of the letter itself. 'It might be Beelzebub, but it ain't,' was the short and smart repartee of a friend of mine, who, when travelling in the United States, was once accosted by a Yankee with the inevitable, 'What might your name be, stranger?' It might be Snooks; but I could not help being convinced that the officer's real name was not Snooks after all. However, I was not to remain very long in suspense on this point, and was still ruminating on this matter, when Mr A——, an old friend of mine, came into my room. We had known each other from the first day of his arrival, and had always been on the best of terms together. He commenced talking on several indifferent subjects—both of us avoiding any allusion to the steamer; but I could not fail in observing that A——, in general very quiet and collected, appeared unusually uncomfortable and absent. He shifted uneasily about on his seat, just like a man who has got something on his mind, and who wishes to unbosom himself, but does not know how to set about it. At last he seemed to have come to

some resolve, for suddenly he jumped up from his chair and paced the room several times.

'So the *Dragon* has come back, and brought no further news?' said he, turning round upon me.

I told him that was exactly the state of the case.

'Now, look here, H——,' he resumed. 'It's about time this business were put a stop to; and on that account I am here now. But, for mercy's sake, my dear fellow, be calm.' (I had started to my feet.) 'At all events, listen quietly first to what I have to tell you; afterwards, you are quite free to decide what course to take.' And then the whole of the edifying story came out.

Some evenings ago—according to A——'s account, he himself having been from home—his younger brother had had a few friends dining with him. After dinner, and while sitting over their wine, of which they had likely partaken a little more than was good for them, and while debating how to spend the rest of the evening, one of the guests, a Mr L——, had of a sudden proposed to indite the letter about the *Phoenix*, which he declared would be a 'splendid joke.' Neither L—— nor any of the others really meant any harm, for I was on good terms with all of them; but having nothing better on hand, the proposal was at once accepted as 'capital fun;' and the company joined together to concoct the epistle which had been sent to me—with what result, I have told. Next day, neither of them appeared to have thought any more about the affair; when, to their utmost consternation, on the return of the pilot-boat, they were roused by the report, rapidly spread about, of the loss of the *Phoenix*, and of the steps taken to save her. None had expected such serious consequences. But when the departure of the *Dragon*, and lastly the vain search of the latter for the lost vessel, became known, they got very much frightened; and it was decided that the chief culprit should disclose their misdeed to A——, begging him to interfere, and if possible, to get them out of the scrape by pleading their cause with me.

'Now that you know all about this stupid affair,' A—— continued, 'it is of course for you to say how you mean to act. I hardly dare ask you to pardon them, though by generously doing so, you will oblige me to the end of my life. If you decide otherwise, my interference is at an end. Consider, however, that you have, to a certain extent, their future fate in your hands. L—— himself will not have the courage to shew his face again, and the consequences will be most serious to him. As he did not venture to tell you himself, I could not well refuse his earnest request to beg for him and the others. In case you forgive them, L—— promises to come round after dark to tell you how deeply he regrets his foolish act. I am also commissioned to inform you, as a matter of course, that the four engaged in this affair are ready to refund all the expenses incurred; which I consider but a just punishment for what they have done.'

What was I to do? Making the names of the actors public, would certainly damage them seriously, but do little good to me now. On the other hand, angry and vexed as I was at the thought of the care and trouble I had undergone, it was a relief to find that the danger to the

vessel, and the consequent loss to me, had no real foundation. After a short consideration, I gave way to the earnest pleading of friend A——, and granted a free pardon upon the conditions proposed by him—at which happy result A—— left me, evidently much relieved.

There is little more to add to my story. The actors and amateurs of hoaxing had received a lesson they were not likely to forget as long as they lived, and which cured them radically of all further propensities in that line. I withstood all demands to make the names known, though I could not prevent the fact becoming public that I had been subjected to a hoax; which caused Mr C—— the pilot to 'salt' his bill rather severely for repairs to his craft, &c.; which otherwise, as he told me, he should not have done. Suffice it to say that the small bill for the *Dragon*, the pilot, &c. amounted in a round sum to close upon five hundred pounds, which the hoaxers had to pay with a grin, glad to get so cheaply out of the scrape.

Thus ended this very foolish but expensive hoax, the moral of which I trust will be taken to heart by those who are fond of practical joking. I may conclude my story by adding that the *Phoenix* arrived safe and sound only a few days later in the harbour.

WHERE IS YESTERDAY?

A little boy, Ernst H——, says to his Mother: 'This is to-day—To-morrow is coming; but, Where is Yesterday?'

'MOTHER! some things I want to know,
Which puzzle and confuse me so.
To-day is present, as you say;
But tell me, Where is Yesterday?

'I did not see it as it went;
I only know how it was spent—
In play, and pleasure, though in rain;
Then why won't it come back again?

'To-day, the sun shines bright and clear;
But then, To-morrow's drawing near.
To-day—oh, do not go away!
And vanish like dear Yesterday.

'Tis when the sun and all the light
Has gone, and darkness brings the night,
It seems to me, you steal away,
And change your name to Yesterday.

'And will all Time be just the same?
To-day—the only name remain?
And shall I always have to say,
To-morrow, you'll be Yesterday?

'I wonder, when we go to heaven,
If there a record will be given
Of all our thoughts and all our ways,
Write on the face of Yesterdays?

'If so, I pray, God grant to me
That mine a noble life may be;
For then, I'll greet with joyous gaze
The dear, lost face of—Yesterdays.'

M. HOLDEN.

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